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ABSTRACT

An examination of the work of Fred Newton Scott and George Jardine can help composition scholars and teachers put their contributions into perspective and serve as a guide through present and future transitional periods in the field of composition. Following and composition revolution of the mid 20th century, many theories of composition promoted by Scott (head of the Department of Rhetoric at the University of Michigan from 1903 until 1927) and subsequently lost were reinvented. Ironically, over 100 years earlier, Scott's work too was prefigured by Jardine, professor of philosophy and logic from 1774 to 1824 at the University of Glasgow. Jardine's work was also lost in a call for educational reform. Numerous parallels exist between the theories, pedagogies, and influence of Scott and Jardine. Both men developed their practical educational theories based on their experiences in the classroom and the needs of their students. Both men integrated their theoretical views with common-sense pedagogical advice in accessible published formats, and rarely separated theory from practice. Finally, both men had an interdisciplinary vision of rhetoric. A study of Jardine's and Scott's intense concerns about the integrity of the language, the separation of writing and speaking from communication, and their fears of methodologies that concentrate simply on correctness rather than on the social nature of writing are beneficial to contemporary developments in the field of composition. (Contains 28 references.) (RS)

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Learning From Our Predecessors: The Work of Fred Newton Scott and George Jardine

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> Composition studies is both the oldest and the newest of the humanities, and our gradual realization of this dual nature is probably the reason for the growing importance of historical study in composition.
>
> --Robert J. Connors

In the influential work The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field (1987), Stephen North criticizes historical studies that investigate the work of particular figures; yet a need still exists for this type of research in nineteenth-century rhetoric, a period which Robert Connors describes as an "historical void" and "echoing tomb" in the historiy of composition instruction (50). Only recently with the publication of works such as Albert Kitzhaber's 1953 dissertation Rhetoric in American Colleges, 1850-1900 (1990), Nan Johnson's Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America (1991), and Winifred Bryan Horner's Nineteenth-Century Scottish Rhetoric: The American Connection, has there been an emergence of scholarship concerning this period in the development of rhetoric.

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In the Introduction to Albert Kitzhaber's important work Rhetoric in the American Colleges, 1850-1900, John Gage clearly outlines why it is necessary for students of contemporary composition studies to study nineteenth-century developments in this field. In light of those earlier developments, the twentieth-century "revolution" in composition theory is seen simply as a part of an historical cycle, where "such revolutions have regularly come and gone" (ix). Our ignorance of earlier developments forces us to continue to reinvent the wheel in composition instruction. Gage reminds us of some of the similarities between current controversies in composition studies and the issues facing our predecessors of the nineteenth-century:

* The relevance of psychology to the composing process.
* New demands for teaching practical skills brought about by change in social structures and educational institutions, which resulted in the oversimplification of rhetorical concepts for the sake of prescriptive application.
* The attitude toward teaching grammar--is it a part of composing or an obstacle to composing?
* The dichotomy between a parts-to-whole or whole-to-part approach to composition instruction (product or process).
* The relationship between rhetoric and literary studies.

Studying the work of those who came before us doesn't

diminish our own contributions but instead gives our work context. We must study where we came from in order to map out where we want to go.

One important figure whose work illumines our own is Fred Newton Scott, Head of the Department of Rhetoric (which he created) at the University of Michigan from 1903 until 1927. Albert Kitzhaber designates Scott as the only "original theorist" of the nineteenth and early twentieth century American rhetoricians (59); yet he has only recently been recognized as a crucial figure in the history of teaching composition through a revival of his works championed by Donald C. Stewart. Scott's important and original work at the University of Michigan failed to have any lasting affect on composition theory or practice because it was lost in the flux of current-traditional pedagogy which followed the 1890 Harvard Report. Following the composition revolution of the mid twentieth-century, we reinvented many theories of composition which were earlier promoted by Scott and subsequently lost to us, such as his belief in the organic nature of writing and the practice of viewing writing as a social act.

Ironically, over one hundred years earlier Scott's work too was prefigured by George Jardine, Professor of philosophy and logic from 1774 to 1824 at the University of Glasgow. Unfortunatley, Jardine's work was also lost in a call for educational reform. The history of composition instruction would read quite differently if we were aware

and built upon these men's accomplishments. Perhaps the most recent composition revolution would not have been necessary if Scott had been aware and built upon Jardine's work and could have been adopted as a cure for the ills of American composition identified by the Harvard Committee rather than the subsequent reliance on current-traditional rhetoric as a panacea for deficiencies in composition instruction. Kitzhaber laments that "rhetoric has never fully recovered the ground lost" from the subversion of Scott's work (xi). Similar ground was lost when Jardine's theories were smothered by Scotland's philosopical shift at the end of the nineteenth-century from education for the many to education for the select few (Horner, Nineteenth-Century Scottish Rhetoric 7).

I think it is an important lesson in our history to glance backwards and compare the work of Scott and Jardine. The subversion of their work illustrates the cyclical nature of developments in composition studies over the last two hundred years. An examination of the work of our predecessors can help us put our own contributions into perspective and perhaps serve as a guide through present and future transitional periods in our field.

Numerous parallels exist between the theories, pedagogies, and influence of Fred Newton Scott and George Jardine. Both men developed their practical educational theories based on their experiences in the classroom and the needs of their students. Both men uniquely integrate their

theoretical views with common-sense pedagogical advice in accessible published formats, and rarely separate theory from practice. Finally and most importantly for this study, both men had an interdisciplinary vision of rhetoric that was ahead of its time. George Jardine adapted his philosophy class to include modern day composition practices, such as writing to learn, peer-editing, writing across the curriculum, and free-writing. Fred Newton Scott consciously struggled to create a distinctively American pedagogical paradigm in opposition to current-traditional rhetoric. Both men promoted unconventional ideas and practices but did not break totally with tradition. Rather, they retained what was valid in traditional practice and theory and used that as a foundation on which to build their new theories. Although immensely popular during their own times, unfortunately neither figure had a lasting influence on rhetorical theory or practice. Donald Stewart suggests that "we are still learning to be [Scott's] contemporaries" ("The Barnyard Goose" 17). This sentiment holds true for the little-known George Jardine as well.

Scott's foreshadowing of contemporary composition and rhetorical theory is clearly demonstrated in his Platonic conception of composition as a social act--a means for searching for truth. He also emphasized the process rather than the product of writing. His early optimism concerning the teaching of writing is evidenced in his 1900 preface to Elementary English Composition:

> Composition in the schools has long been under a curse, and not without reason. It has lacked substance, vitality, enrichment. . . . There has been in composition teaching too much correcting of morbid English, too much metaphor mongering, too much vaporing about style, to permit it to rise to the dignity of a first-rate discipline. But now composition seems to be coming into its rights. . . . The time is at hand when the opportunities for scholarship and general culture in this branch of instruction will be generally recognized. (i)

Scott's optimism was obviously premature. Not until well after the middle of the twentieth-century did the revolution begin in composition studies which Scott prophesied at the turn of the century. "The opportunities for scholarship and general culture in this branch of instruction" which Scott speaks of have only recently presented themselves. Scott made great strides in the field of composition. Although his ideas were generally unadopted by his contemporaries, his modern and liberal conception of composition offers us a wealth of advice and experience from which to draw.

Like Jardine, who came before him, and many composition practitioner-researchers who followed, Scott was concerned with the prescribed role of the teacher. Scott encourages teachers to adopt methodologies that are appropriate for them and their particular students. In a later article, "English Composition as a Mode of Behavior" (1922), Scott

claims that "a large part of the theme-correcting of which we hear so much complaint, is probably wasted" (463). He conjectures that "the almost universal practice of teaching composition by pointing out to the writer the errors in his themes seems not likely soon to be superseded" because regardless of "crimes [that are] committed in its name," it has been the dominant teaching practice for over two thousand years and "no other method has been as yet invented that will in practice take its place" (463). Ironically, Jardine not only had invented a teaching method that could have replaced current-traditional teaching strategies, but he also had published his findings as early as 1818. He had proposed a practical method of instructing students based on collaborative learning, adapting pedagogical techniques to students' needs, and praising student accomplishments. He had encouraged instructors to instill in students the habits which would help them "without either pain or effort" become their "own best teachers" by diagnosing their own strengths and weaknesses (Outlines 421-22). Unfortunately, Scott did not know of Jardine's work and thus could not build upon his earlier ideas. Scott's and Jardine's theories concerning the role of the teacher and methodology which does not concentrate solely on student errors is the cornerstone for many modern day composition treatises, such as Shaughnessy's Errors and Expectations (1977). Modern authors are forced to replicate the earlier works rather than build upon them.

Another example of the similarities between the theories

of Scott and Jardine is found in their objections to the use of bloated academic prose in both writing and speech--the kind of academic jargon currently labled "Engfish" by Ken Macrorie (Telling Writing). In The Teaching of English in Elementary and the Secondary School, Scott explains his condemnation of teachers who rigorously adhere to rules in both their own speech and writing and in evaluating their students' communicative efforts, thereby widening the gap between the student's natural urge to communicate and the rigorous bonds of "schoolmaster's English:"

> One obstacle which lies in the way of most teachers. . . is the tradition of a stiff, frigid, and yet inaccurate style of speech and writing sometimes denominated "schoolmaster's English." . . . Walking through the halls of a school where such speech is traditional, one may see the evidences of it in the faces of the students. Sitting in the classroom, one may fairly hear the mental machinery creak. . . . One who examines the writings of teachers who are addicted to it will frequently find, scattered through the arid waste, hideous artificial flowers of rhetoric, anecdotes of questionable propriety, and sometimes humour approximating to horse-play. The teacher of English who has been so unfortunate as to acquire this scholastic jargon and its vicious concomitants should take pains to rid himself of it by every

means in his power. (309)

This belief reiterates Jardine's censure of teachers who read from prepared lectures. Jardine explains that to be effective as a public schoolteacher, one must "extend his system of accommodation even to the language and style of his lectures. . . [by adopting] a plain, perspicuous, and even familiar mode of expression" (Outlines 264-65). Scott and Jardine's concern over the integrity of academic language is still with us, as evidenced in Donald Stewart's 1991 warning to scholars against becoming enslaved by current literary critical jargon. Stewart labels this jargon "'lit/crit speak,'" a sub-species of 'academic-speak,' a language greatly inferior to English in both diction and syntax" (The Present State of Scholarship 174).

Scott believes that the best teachers are those not trained simply in "schoolmaster's English" but rather those who study in a variety of fields including history of the English language, the history and theory of rhetoric, comparative philology, and the psychology of speech. He claims that these teachers fully understand the place of English grammar within the overall curriculum; they understand that grammar is not merely an abstract study of rules and formulas but rather that it shares the underlying qualities of literature--"the expressive and communicative activities of the English speaking race" (316). He points out that these teachers realize that their chief duty in

teaching is to "awaken the minds of [their] students to the meaning of their own familiar modes of expression" (316). He further states that good teachers know that effective teaching methods are individual, constructive, rational, systematic and informed by common sense, rather than simply a marking of the violations of rules (317). Jardine similarly describes good teachers as those who "are ardent and diligent" in their search "for the particular knowledge required--the arrangement and adaptation of it to the purpose of those to whom it is to be communicated" (Outlines 269). He suggests that teachers, as well as students, should study in a variety of fields including philosophy of history, political economy, and "the improvement of eloquence" (Outlines x). The departmentalization of American colleges after the civil war unfortunatley discouraged this "across the curriculum" kind of study.

In the revealing preface to the 1908 edition of Elementary English Composition, Scott outlines the deficiencies that he perceives in current-traditional methodology and offers alternatives to the existing theory and pedagogy, concerns that are reiterated and expanded in many of his works. He notes three causes of indifference towards English language and composition classes held by secondary students: a lack of novelty in present teaching methods, the repression of writing as a social act, and the isolation of written from spoken discourse (ii). These deficiencies echo the weaknesses in education that Jardine

notes throughout his work Outlines of a Philosophical Education (1818, 1825): a lack of teaching strategies that engage the students and the denial of learning as a social act (371). Jardine explains that effective "extempore" teaching

> brings the mind of the speaker into closer contact with that of the hearer; accommodates itself more easily to the wants of the latter; enables the teacher to repeat what has not been fully conceived, to change the mode of illustration, to relieve the attention, to excite the curiosity, anad to direct, anticipate, and assist the students in a great variety of ways, which are in vain to be expected from the reader of a written lecture. (Outlines 266)

Scott claims that instruction at the secondary level is stagnant. Rather than enlisting the students' interest in English through innovative teaching methodology, he states that most practitioners teach by lecturing on prescribed grammar rules in the same format that they were presented over and over again in the lower grades (ii). He offers instead ideas for the novel presentation of familiar ideas and rules; he constructs "a series of definite, concrete problems, based upon attractive material and challenging curiosity, each problem discovering to the pupil who solves it a practical principle, or a useful idiom, or a typical situation in real life" (ii-iii). Likewise, Jardine

chastizes teachers who strictly adhere to the lecture method of instruction and insists that the primary goal of the teacher "is not so much to convey information, as to stimulate industry, and cultivate the natural abilities of his pupils" (Outlines 40).

Both Scott and Jardine adopted innovative teaching methodology in an attempt to engage the students' interest. They designed paper assignments that illustrate their sincere interest in students as individuals and in drawing them to the subject in a novel and intimate way. These suggested paper topics force the students to question and examine language in relation to other academic disciplines and in its benefit to their lives. The topics also bring audience consideration into the foreground. Among Scott's list of suggested topics from Elementary English Composition are these: explain to a little child why we celebrate the Fourth of July, using as simple language as possible (19); and explain to our class in a brief composition the principal duties of a school director or a member of the board of education (51). Jardine states that the subjects of themes "must be various and numerous" (Outlines 299), and that students should "select a theme from those subjects with which they think themselves best acquainted (Outlines 352). He suggests these topical subjects for themes: "A public is preferable to a private education," "An institution of prizes in universities is useful," and "The early habit of reading novels is hurtful to serious study"

(Outlines 346). By giving current writing assignments that interest the students rather than simply adhering to textbooks and lectures, Jardine and Scott believe that the teacher can engage his students more readily.

At every opportunity, both educators encourage the teacher to abandon the textbook in an effort to enlist the students' interest in creative and practical methods. For example, Scott often assigned essay based on newspaper articles to encourage common sense learning rather than strict adherence to traditional sources and formats--a principle we currently embrace. Although his texts are liberal and innovative, Scott tries to avoid a repetition of the servile devotion to any text, a concept characteristic of the current-traditional methodology which he is attempting to replace. He repeats the following common sense warning in the preface to most of his textbooks, an indication of his devotion to practical teaching methods and individualized instruction:

> [N]o text-book should be swallowed whole: least of all a text-book in English composition. The teacher who keeps close watch upon the progress of the pupils will always be the best judge of the kind of instruction and the method of class-room procedure best adapted to a particular set of pupils. (Elementaray English Composition iii)

Jardine offers a similar warning to his contemporaries:

> No one of these works [textbooks], however, able

> and judicious as some of them undoubtedly are, deserves to be implicitly followed as a guide, . . . nor sets forth those still more essential duties of the teacher, which consist in adapting his instructions to the opening capacity of his pupils. (Outlines 39)

In "English Composition as a Mode of Behavior," Scott surmises that children entering school possess two invaluable gifts: "an eagerness to communicate and be communicated with, and a vocabulary--if we may stretch the term to include all significant externalizings of himself--sufficient to convey his feelings and ideas" (468). These criteria highlight the social nature of composition--the desire to communicate--and prompt Scott's novel emphasis on audience which is included in his textbooks. For example, in the preface to The New Composition-Rhetoric, Scott reminds us that "composition is . . . a social act, and the student [should] therefore constantly [be] led to think of himself as writing or speaking for a specified audience. Thus not mere expression but communication as well is made the business of composition" (iii). In an effort to facilitate this mode of thinking and to rouse student interest in composition, Scott draws the writing topics in this text from a variety of sources including literature, student life, and "vocations towards which various classes of students are naturally tending" (iv). Scott is unknowingly taking up an issue introduced earlier by Jardine

and indirectly addressing issues that we still question today, such as, "Is it the role of composition classes to train students for the business world?" and "To what extent should teachers be involved in the socialization process?".

Particularly disturbing to Scott is the omission of audience consideration in grammar textbooks and by practitioners. Although he advocates the Aristotelian concept of adapting the message to the audience, he does not simply view meaning as external to the writing process; instead he believes that meaning is created through the interaction between interlocutor and the audience. Scott shares Plato's concern for the welfare of the community and the belief that "good discourse is that which by disseminating truth creates a healthy public opinion and thus effects, in Plato's words, 'a training and improvement in the souls of the citizens.'" (415). In an especially illuminating passage in the preface to Elementary English Composition, Scott sums up the harm in neglecting audience, vindicates his own insistence on audience consideration, and reminds us of the social nature of composition studies:

> [A]t the beginning of secondary instruction it is not uncommon for the teacher to rely upon the inward stimulus [for communicating] alone. He does not lead his pupils to think of "the other man" for whom they are writing or speaking. This is to reject one of the most powerful of incentives to good writing. If a pupil can be led to see that of

> two ways of expressing his ideas, one is better than the other because it is more readily understood by the particular person addressed . . . he has a new motive for examining his English and for learning more about it. Presented as a means of meeting definite social needs more or less effectively, of winning attention and consideration, the various devices of grammar and rhetoric make an appeal to self-interest which pupils can understand. They will learn the mechanical and grammatical details of writing . . . as they come to appreciate the value of these things to themselves as members of society. (i-ii)

Jardine shares Scott's concern for audience analysis and the social nature of language, as evidenced in his defense of the collaborative learning methods he has included in his own classroom: This system forms "intellectual habits which are indispensable at once to the. . . business of active life" (Outlines 394). Jardine goes on to describe the classroom as a community, complete with social responsibilites toward both writers and readers, and penalties for those who do not follow the rules of community participation (Outlines 367-374).

Although the majority of Scott's textbooks are devoted to familiar features of writing instruction--grammar, usage, paragraph development, style and diction, his views are always made distinct through his insistence on the

rhetorical context of communication, individualized instruction, and common-sense pedagogy.

Current theorists and practitioners are not so familiar with the names of Fred Newton Scott and Geoge Jardine, but our field is certainly acquainted and dedicated to their conceptions of education. A study of Jardine and Scott's intense concerns about the integrity of the language, the separation of writing and speaking from communication, and their fears of methodologies that concentrate simply on correctness rather than on the social nature of writing are beneficial to current developments in the field. We are perhaps still striving towards both Jardine and Scott's perceptions of an interdisciplinary approach to composition as illustrated by the ongoing rifts between various disciplines in our field. Their consummate visions are still not fully realized.

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